12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

ironical in their replies to the question of how José achieved his present status. Typical answers were, "Ask the priests," or, "Only José knows."

This ill-concealed resentment toward José is less indicative of personal animosity than of hostility toward his family and the mission, which José is considered to represent. Mission policy is obviously to recognize as chiefs persons of some prestige who are friendly toward the priests and Christianity and who can be depended upon to make known the priests' wishes and urge acceptance of them. As for José, this policy entails favoritism toward him and his family, which his sons and sons-in-law and their wives reciprocate by currying favor with the priests and bearing stories of the peccadilloes of the villagers. The people are well aware of José's status as an instrument of the mission and, for this reason, do not recognize him as a true chief. This hostility toward José and his followers causes, in part, the factionalism to be discussed later.

The priests, despite their policy of recognizing certain men as chiefs, generally bypass them and deal with the people individually in matters of trade, religion, and family. The net result is to relieve a source of potential conflict by making it unnecessary for the chief to intervene on behalf of the mission in individual cases, as opposed to general support of mission policy. But the importance of the chieftaincy in its role as intermediary with the mission, which is its only function, is thereby diminished. In passing, it should be noted that in some upstream villages, where mission influence is weaker than in Missão Velha, there are no formally recognized chiefs.

Shamanism is the only element of the native religion that is still practiced on the Cururú. Although the Indians seek medical aid at the mission and the Indian post, this has not made serious inroads on the art of the shaman, for